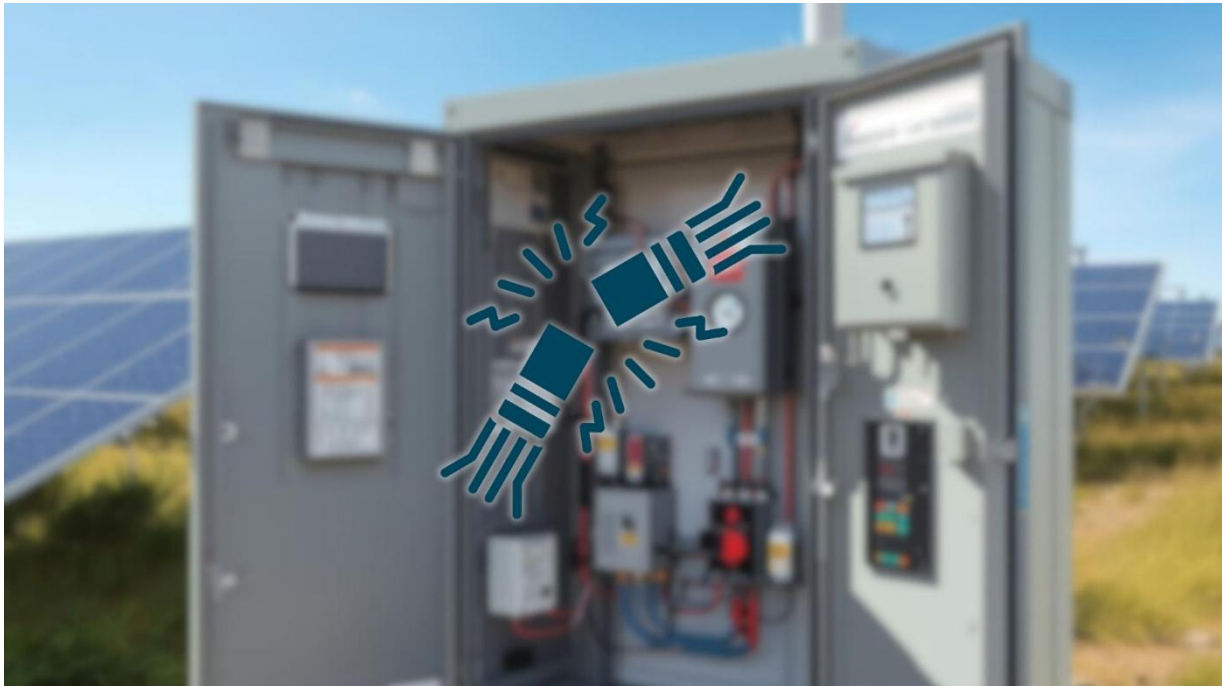


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F-GAS REGULATION IN PHOTOVOLTAICS

COMMISSIONING YES – GRID CONNECTION NO

What recent legal interpretations mean for PV project planning – and why it now makes sense to order compliant switchgear (Schaltanlage) early.

With the F-Gas Regulation (EU) 2024/573, the legal framework for medium-voltage switchgear (Mittelspannungs-Schaltanlagen) will change significantly from 1 January 2026. In our previous article (*“Why 2026 Already Matters Now”*), we discussed the question of when a system is considered “commissioned (in Betrieb genommen)” – and what risks may arise if the grid connection (Netzanschluss) is delayed.

Many project developers have been concerned: If the grid operator delays the connection, the SF₆ ban could apply – even though the system is technically complete.

A recent legal assessment has now brought more clarity.

Legal Situation: Commissioning Is Not the Same as Grid Connection

According to established legal interpretation, supported by the FAQ of the German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, 30 July 2025) and the European Commission FAQ (17 June 2025), *energisation* of the grid is not required for the commissioning (Inbetriebnahme) of switchgear within the meaning of the F-Gas Regulation.

The Umweltbundesamt states:

“Commissioning is defined as the point in time when the system is handed over to the operator for use after completion of all necessary functional, performance or other tests and all required inspections.” [FAQ Umweltbundesamt](#)

In practical terms, this means: Once the switchgear has been completed, tested and handed over, it is considered commissioned – regardless of whether it has already been connected to the grid or where it is physically located. For project developers, this means that the feared ‘grid bottleneck’ at the end of 2025 does not automatically lead to a violation of the F-Gas Regulation.

Practical Implications

While this interpretation is based “only” on official FAQs rather than a court ruling, it is recognised and applied in administrative practice. Therefore, switchgear that is completed, tested and accepted by 31 December 2025 can be regarded as commissioned in compliance with the regulation, even if the grid connection takes place later.

Nevertheless, several points remain crucial:

- **Documentation is key:** Test, acceptance and handover protocols must be properly dated and archived.
- **Communication with the grid operator:** Early coordination helps to prevent misunderstandings regarding “construction progress vs. commissioning”.
- **Involvement of authorities:** Where uncertainties remain, confirmation from the competent *Landesbehörde* (state authority) may be obtained.

Our Recommendation: Avoid Delays Before They Occur

Even though the legal definition is now clearer, any project delay remains costly – especially if caused by technical retrofits or disputes between the parties involved.

Our practical advice: If grid commissioning (Netzinbetriebnahme) of existing projects in 2025 appears at risk, ensure early documentation and establish direct contact with both the grid operator and the local district authority (Landkreisbehörde).

Conclusion

The good news: Grid connection (Netzanschluss) is no longer a legal stumbling block under the F-Gas Regulation.

Even better, however, is not to enter the grey area in the first place: With early planning, thorough documentation and F-Gas-free switchgear technology, projects can be implemented in a legally compliant, economical and sustainable manner – fully in line with the goals of the energy transition (Energiewende).

Note: *This article reflects our practical experience and is not a substitute for legal advice.*

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